

Attorney Docket No AHUG.011
Serial No. 10/633,471
Response to Office Action mailed 10/30/2006

B. Remarks

1. Specification. The examiner objected to the specification because he did not find proper antecedent basis in the specification for "a plurality of transmission means," a "first plurality of transmission means," and a second plurality of transmission means." Applicant has amended the claims to remove the terms "transmission means."

The examiner further objected to the specification because he did not find proper antecedent basis for the limitations requiring the plug, splines and first conduits to be of unitary construction, and for the limitations requiring the socket, receptacles and second conduits to be of unitary construction. Applicant notes that the examiner interpreted being "of unitary construction" to mean that each of the plug, the socket, the splines, the receptacles, the first conduits and the second conduits would each be of unitary construction, whereas the limitation was intended to claim that each of the grouped items were made in a single piece. Support for the limitation may be found in Figures 24 and 25 which show the conduits to run through a single plug and single socket. In regard to the splines, the specification, page 14, lines 5-6, states that the outer splines and the center spline may be made in one piece. The claims have been amended to clarify the limitation that these parts are in one piece.

2. Claim objections.

The examiner objected to claims 7,8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 43, 44, 45, 46, 57, 58, 59, 63, 64, 65, and 66 because "the first tubing section" and "the second tubing section lacked antecedent basis. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to recite a first tubing section and a second tubing section. Applicant has amended dependent claims 24 -26 to recite a plug and a socket rather than a first tubing section and a second tubing section.

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Applicant submits that dependent claims 43-46 properly have antecedent basis in the "first tubing section" and "second tubing section" of claim 35. Claims 57-59 and 63-65 have been amended to recite "first casing sections" and "second casing sections."

The examiner objected to claim 1 because it was not clear that the orientations are not governed by the securing device. Claim 1 has been amended to delete "by the securing device."

The examiner objected to claim 27 and 28 because it was unclear how the wire related to the transmission means. Independent claims 18 has been amended to delete the limitation of "a plurality of transmission means"

The examiner objected to claim 35 because it was unclear how the limitation regarding a plurality of splines mating with a plurality of receptacles related to the engaging step. The limitation cited by the examiner has been removed from the claim.

The examiner objected to claims 36, 37 because the positioning step lacked antecedent basis. Claims 36 has been amended to recited "the aligning step." The examiner objected to claim 37 because it was unclear how the plurality of splines related to the splines in claim 35. Claim 37 has been canceled.

The examiner objected to claims 39, 40, and 41. Claims 39, 40, and 41 have been amended.

The examiner objected to claims 48 and 49. Claims 48 and 49 have been canceled.

The examiner objected to claim 52 because both instances of "assembly should be deleted. Claim 52 has been so amended.

The examiner objected to claim 61 because it was unclear how the conduit containing material adapted to carry an optical signal relates to the transmission means in claim 50. Claim 50 has been amended to delete "transmission means."

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3. Double Patenting. Applicant submits that rods are solid while tubing has a central passageway, and that application 10/671,141 is directed solely to rods and not tubing. The examiner has stated that using tubing in place of rods is considered obvious and fails to render the conflicting claims patentably distinct. Applicant notes that the rejection is provisional because the claims of the '141 patent have not been finalized. Applicant submits that a terminal disclaimer is the appropriate remedy, but requests that such terminal disclaimer be made when the final state of the claims is known.

4. Claim rejections 35 USC 102.

1. The examiner rejected claims 1-3, 7-11, 13-20, 24-28, 30-41, 43-46, 50, 52-53, 57-61, and 63-66 as being anticipated by Moon (US 2,750,569).

2. The examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-11, 24-55, 30-41, 52-55, 57-61 and 63-66 as being anticipated by Curlett (US 4,836,305).

3. The examiner rejected claims 47-50, 52-59 and 63-66 as being anticipated by Wilson (US 1,781,091).

Claims 2, 11, 12, 19, 27, 28, 29, 37, 40, 42, 48, 49, 51, 60, 61, 62, and 64 have been canceled.

Applicant submits that the amended independent claims distinguish over Moon, Curlett, and Wilson for the following reasons: the shape of the splines, the one piece design of the plug and socket units, and the conduits in the plug and socket that are part of the plug and socket. Moon aligns in one position and one position only. Moreover, Moon's connectors are inside the

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tubing and Moon does not have conduits running through the plug and socket. Curlett has conduits and connectors, but uses multiple parts to accomplish this end, whereas applicant's plug and socket have conduits and splines that are all in a one piece plug or in a one piece socket. Wilson does not have a center spline or conduits.

Applicant further submits that neither Moon, Curlett or Wilson disclose a center spline with coaxially positioned outer splines that intermesh with receptacle splines in a cavity of the socket. Moreover, claim 1 includes the limitation that the center spline forms a cylindrical passage having an inside passage diameter that is the same as an inside plug wall diameter. Neither Moon, Curlett, nor Wilson disclose such a configuration.

Support for applicants amendments can be found in the Specification discussion of FIG. 3, page 13, lines 8—page 14, line 2; the discussion of FIGS. 4, 5 and 6, page 14 lines 3-8; the discussion of FIGS. 7 and 8, page 14, lines 9-15, the discussion of FIG. 9, page 15, lines 18-page 16, line 2; and the discussion of FIG. 11, page 16, lines 11-13. See also, the discussion of FIGS. 22 through 28, page 18, lines 9-18.

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant submits that the claims of the present application are not fairly taught by any of the references of record, taken either alone or in combination. Therefore, allowance of the present application is in order, and is requested.

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